



The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 1 February 1968



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DAILY BRIEF
1 FEBRUARY 1968

1. South Vietnam
(as of 5:30 AM
EST)

Most enemy forces in the Saigon area were routed by about noon, Saigon time, today. Allied forces are now moving against the remaining pockets of resistance.

In the northern half of South Vietnam, Communist forces remain entrenched in the highland cities of Kontum and Ban Me Thuot. At Hue, an enemy force believed to be of regimental size is still in control of part of the city.

The Liberation Front and Hanoi radios last night announced the establishment of a "Revolutionary Administration" in South Vietnam. The "Administration" is supposed to be the new authority in Saigon and other areas where the Viet Cong have influence over the population. Its main purpose, according to the broadcasts, is to serve as a strong voice in demanding the withdrawal of US forces.

2. Korea

There has been no word yet out of Moscow in reaction to the collision yesterday of a US destroyer and a Soviet freighter in the Sea of Japan. The Russian ship is apparently returning to Vladivostok instead of proceeding on to Odessa.

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3. Cuba

Havana and Mexico City have completed arrangements for monthly flights to bring US citizens from Cuba. The flights will begin next Wednesday. There are still some 900 US citizens and about 2,000 alien relatives who want to get out.

4. Mali-Cuba

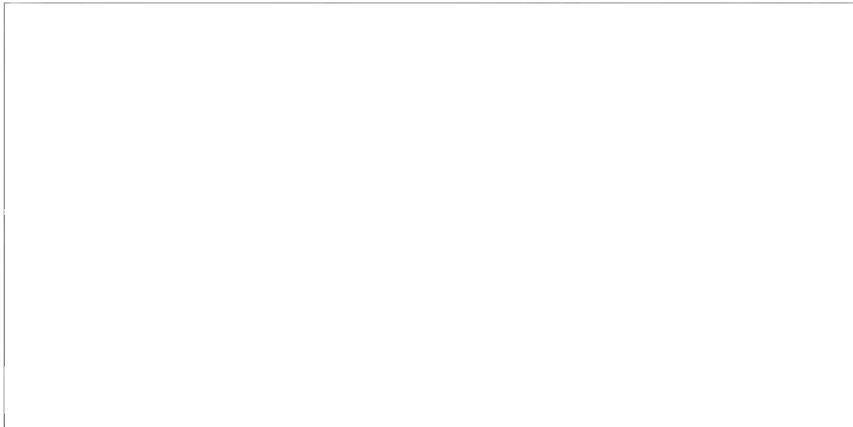
Cuba has agreed to send some 400 technicians to Mali over an extended period [redacted]. The first contingent is expected to arrive next month; some of these will probably be used to train Mali's civilian militia. This raises the possibility that Castro intends to establish a beachhead in another radical African state--similar to his efforts in the Congo (Brazzaville).

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Only 25 Cuban technicians--all non-military types--are now in Mali.

5. Soviet Union -
India

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6. Panama

Partisans of presidential candidates Samudio and Arias are preparing for a clash at a campaign rally in western Panama on Saturday. Samudio's backers are said to be planning a deliberate provocation. The national guard chief says order will be maintained, but the local commander--who opposes Arias--is in a position to let the situation slip out of hand.

7. Nigeria

The recently renewed federal offensive is making some headway, but an end to the fighting is not in sight. On the political front in Lagos, the ruling Supreme Military Council has moved to cut back the growing influence of the civilian members of the regime. This only suggests that the council intends to maintain military rule well into the postwar period.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT'S EYES ONLY

Special Daily Report on North Vietnam



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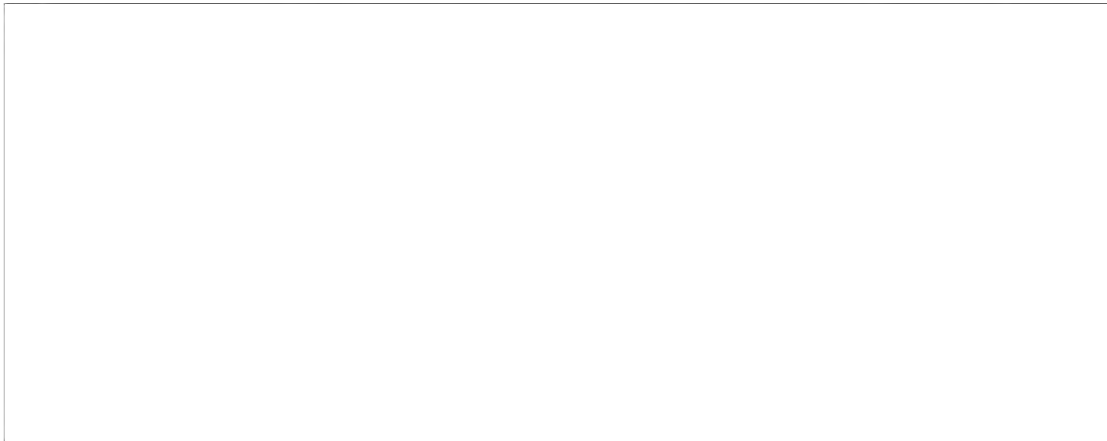
I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

Hanoi Firm on Trinh Formula: After returning last week from a trip to Hanoi, the North Vietnamese ambassador in Laos told his [] Soviet colleagues that the recent Trinh statement was North Vietnam's "ultimate word" on negotiations and that it was up to the US to respond. He also portrayed the San Antonio formula as a "US maneuver" to impose conditions for a bombing halt. In conversations with Ambassador Sullivan, the Soviet ambassador showed special interest in Mr. Clifford's interpretation of the "no advantage" idea and asked for an exact text. Sullivan sent him two copies and suggested one be passed to his North Vietnamese colleague.

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Communists Comment on Events in South: Communist propaganda is giving heavy play to the upsurge in military activity in the South and stressing that by this show of strength the Communists have demonstrated that the US cannot accomplish its objectives. The clear implication is that the US must resort to a political compromise. Vietnamese Communist propaganda beamed to the South emphasizes

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the size and scope of the offensive as if to underscore Communist capabilities to stand up to US military power.

Hanoi has made no attempt to portray the current offensive as a conclusive or final stage in the struggle, but instead is treating it as further proof that Communist forces hold the initiative and are able to launch large-scale, coordinated attacks. This, it says, demonstrates once again that the US is in a "losing situation." A broadcast on 31 January said the upsurge in Communist military activity is a continuation of successes achieved during the past month. It claimed that recent Communist victories had caused the US to cancel the allied ceasefire, and the Communists have "repaid the enemy in kind" by launching widespread attacks on 30 January.

Hanoi's replay of a Viet Cong news agency report on 31 January took the same line in claiming that Communist forces had successfully attacked "all over the battlefield" and reduced the allies to confusion and clumsy responses. The Viet Cong radio singled out the attacks in Saigon as especially significant in showing Communist abilities to strike the heart of the enemy camp.

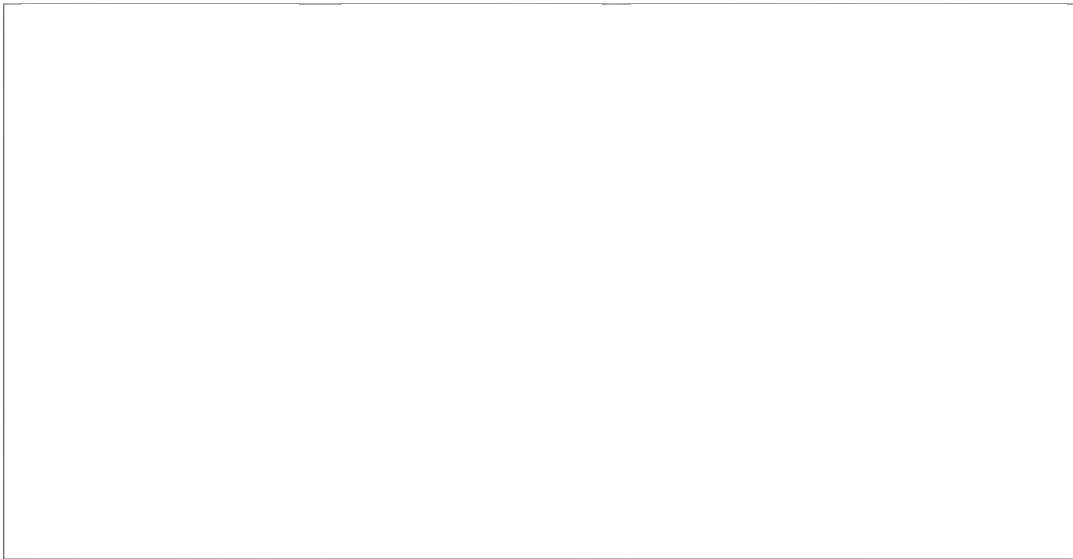
There has been no Chinese Communist commentary on the situation as yet. Soviet broadcasts, however, are carrying both Western and Vietnamese Communist accounts of the action and stressing the US predicament. A commentary in Pravda on 31 January says the Communists have launched a "new major offensive" which disproves "US propaganda" that Viet Cong forces are "depleted." It charges that US optimism is designed solely to mislead people before the presidential elections. It also asserts that the offensive is a reply to continued US attempts to seek a military solution to the conflict, and that these events show again that the US is "bogging down deeper" in a war "without prospects."

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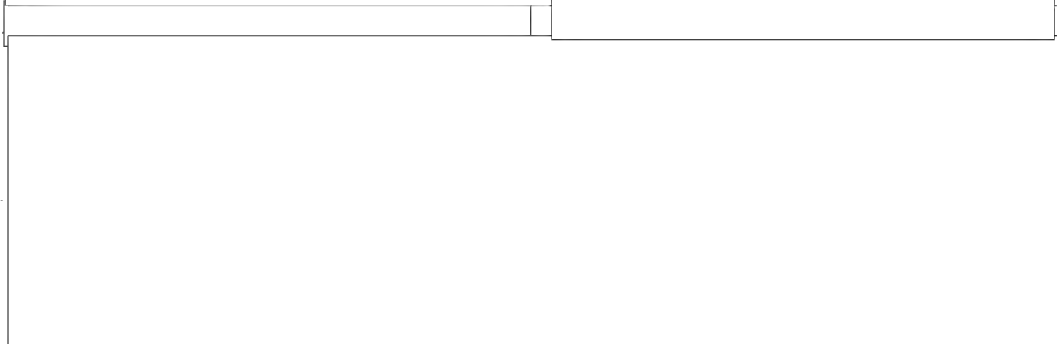


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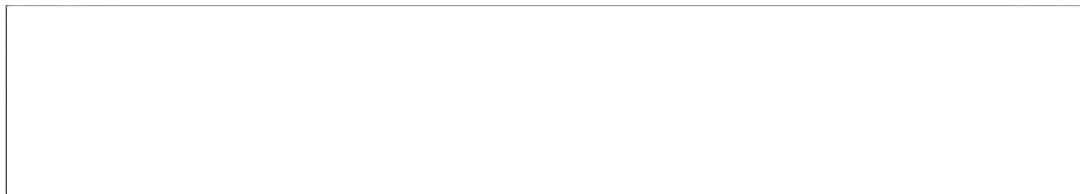
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II. NORTH VIETNAMESE REFLECTIONS OF US POLITICAL ATTITUDES ON THE WAR

Nothing of significance to report.

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